



# Title IX reverts to 2020 regulations after federal ordinance

By Grace Bertrand

**C**ONFUSION lingers over schools nationwide as 2024 Title IX policies were vacated by a federal judge on Jan. 9, requiring institutions to revert back to the 2020 regulations.

As a result, Rider's Title IX Anti-Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy has been updated back to comply with the 2020 Title IX regulations on the university website.

Title IX Coordinator Debbie Stasolla said in an interview with The Rider News, "I don't see any difference between either set of regulations in terms of its effect on our policies ... Yes, there are definitely some differences, but not in a way that would affect the safety of our community or any populations within our community."

Rider's Title IX department sent out a universitywide email on Jan. 27 to update students and faculty on its no-tolerance policy, the responsibility to report cases, support for parenting students and who students can contact.

In the email, Stasolla and Ryan McKinney, director of Title IX and Equal Opportunity Compliance, wrote, "Harassment or discrimination of any kind, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence and stalking, have no place at Rider."

Under the 2024 regulations, put in place by former President Joe Biden, students and faculty were protected under Title IX against all types of sex discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy and sexual harrassment.

Stasolla explained that the 2024 regulations gave the Title IX department clarity on expanded definitions and more flexibility on resolution options, which it did not have before.

With compliance to the 2020 regulations, institutions are reverting the changes made to their policy in their expanded definitions for harassment, policy procedures, new training requirements, pregnancy-related harassment, an informal resolution process, appeal of supportive measures, prohibitions against retaliation and gender identity as a protected category, according to the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

As Rider aims to continue its enforcement of a no-tolerance harassment policy, Stasolla explained the changes in the Title IX regulations should not affect how students perceive the Title IX department as a reliable resource.

"The bottom line is that whether under the 2024 regulations or the 2020 regulations, what we are responsible for in our office is to make sure that no one is limited in their full experience, educational experience or work experience here at Rider," said Stasolla.

## Community struggles

When it comes to a difference in how the department handled cases that arose under the 2020



Destiny Pagan/The Rider News

Ryan McKinney and Debbie Stasolla look to help others with new Title IX policies.

regulations versus the 2024 regulations, McKinney expressed a neutral sentiment: "We have to do it the way that the law is written."

Both McKinney and Stasolla agreed they had a shared appreciation for the 2024 regulations because of the expanded opportunities and flexibility it offered them in resolving matters. However, Stasolla described the expanded definitions of discriminatory harassment as "more challenging" for the Title IX department to apply to a variety of cases.

Stasolla and McKinney said they often found themselves asking, "How do we apply this long definition and try to distinguish between what is 'subjectively and objectively offensive, so severe or pervasive?'"



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# Women leaders want next generation to 'push the envelope'

By Caroline Haviland

**E**VERY March since its federal recognition in 1987, Womxn's History Month aims to recognize the overlooked contributions women have made to society, and with ongoing attacks on diversity, equity and inclusion, highlighting the differences women make is more pertinent than ever.

Whether it be its administration, community, sports teams and beyond, Rider is no stranger to the powerful figures Womxn's History Month honors.

## 'The sky's the limit'

Before being in one of the university's highest positions, Rider Provost DonnaJean Fredeen overcame many obstacles throughout her career, which began in the male-dominated field of chemistry.

She started off in Connecticut at the University of Bridgeport as the youngest and only female professor in the chemistry department.

"My very first day a colleague said to me, 'It's going to take a while to get your research agenda going. Why don't you work for me while you do?'. ...It was just the way he said 'Why don't you work for me,' and not with me," Fredeen said. "So I said 'If I wanted a [post-doctorate] I would've gone to Yale.'"

She eventually took a position at Southern Connecticut State University and worked her way up to be the dean of the school of arts and sciences. In 2013, Fredeen landed at Rider, a place that has become home to her.

Fredeen realized throughout her career that women bring a necessary component to the education field, saying, "We can bring that compassion, but when it's

time to make tough decisions we do it."

The provost voiced that representation and standing up for what you believe is vital for all women to see from one another, especially in the current political climate.

"Make sure your voice is heard outside. At this point in time in our country we need to make certain our voices are heard. Not just at Rider University or in our communities, but in our state and in our country," said Fredeen.

Similarly, Director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion Jasmine Johnson faced her own battles as a young woman of color in the workplace, and repeated the same confidence in representation to show other woman what is possible.

"Being able to see somebody that identifies the same as you gives students a chance to really understand they can do this too, and I think that's what makes it so important to me being a woman leader on campus. The sky's the limit," said Johnson.

Johnson started her career in higher education at Seton Hall, where she fostered diversity initiatives such as the Inclusion Alliance, which developed seminars and lessons to create inclusivity throughout the campus.

She came to Rider in fall 2024, but struggled with imposter syndrome, as she felt she didn't belong in



Illustration by Maggie Kleiner/The Rider News

From left to right: Lynn Milligan, Jasmine Johnson, Christina Natoli and DonnaJean Fredeen are all women leaders on campus.

such a prestigious role. As she grew more into the position, she began to understand her place at Rider, and hopes to motivate younger women to take a leap of faith.

"I would also encourage the next generation of women leaders to push the envelope. That's how we move forward," Johnson said. "Someone has to step out of their comfort zone and out of societal norms to figure out what the future can really look like. That's how pioneers and trailblazers exist."



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### DAVE GREEN'S PATH TO RIDER

*An Australian exchange student is making the most of his time at Rider.*  
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# SECURITY BRIEFS

BY JASMINE WHITE

## Damaged doors

Unsecured exits. On Feb. 25, at 2:02 p.m., Public Safety observed one of the Hill Hall, B-Pod exterior doors propped open with a rock. The officer removed the rock, then at 2:25 p.m., the officer observed the same door propped open. While the officer was securing it, he observed another student enter a propped door on the A-Pod of Hill Hall. Upon further inspection, the A-Pod door was damaged and could not be secured. Facilities was notified of damage and requested to make repairs.



## Marijuana in Moore

Pungent odors. On Feb. 27, at 10:12 p.m., Public Safety was dispatched to Moore Hall for the report of the odor of marijuana near the elevator. Upon arrival, Public Safety met with the Residence Life staff who reported being notified of the odor by a student. Public Safety detected the odor in and around the elevator. They checked the entire building but could not locate the source of the odor.

## CORRECTION

In a Feb. 26 news article regarding Gospel Fest, The Rider News incorrectly stated it had not been held in Gill Chapel for over ten years. Gospel Fest was held in the Gill Chapel in 2022. The Rider News regrets this error.

# Communications professor retires after 37 years

By Hannah Newman

**A**FTER a 37-year Rider career, a student from Nigeria that never thought Lawrenceville would change his life, communications professor Bosah Ebo has decided 2025 is his year to retire at age 73.

“It wasn’t easy because when you’ve been at a place for 37 years it’s almost like a home to you,” said Ebo. “At some point I felt like it’s time to do something else.”

Ebo’s retirement plans consist of traveling the world and continuing to write and add to the collection of books he has written.

“I love to write ... I’ve published a couple of books already,” said Ebo.

In 1975, Ebo came to America for college with plans to move back to Nigeria after graduating, until he found a new home within his chosen career.

Ebo attended the University of Wisconsin as an international student where he received his undergraduate degrees in economics and political science, and a master’s degree in communications. He then received a doctorate in international communication from the University of Iowa.

Before finishing his dissertation at Iowa, Ebo’s academic adviser was in China for a year, giving him time to kill before receiving his Ph.D.

Ebo’s plan was to get a job for the year until his adviser returned. After finishing a fellowship at the University of Rochester, he stumbled upon an advertisement for Rider University. Trying to find something to occupy him until he completes his doctorate, he took a job at Rider thinking it would only last a year or two.

“I had no intention of staying,” said Ebo. “I came here ... and I just loved it.”

After falling in love with the location, size and environment of Rider, it took 37 years for him to even think about leaving.

“For me, working with the students is why I love what I do,” said Ebo. “They inspire me.”

Although every experience at Rider was valuable, he said his colleagues are an important part of his career and the closer it gets to his retirement, the more he thinks about how much he is going to miss the people he has worked alongside for so long.

“My colleagues are incredible ... you don’t stay at a place for this long and not make some good friends,” said Ebo. “I’ve made friends that’ll last me a lifetime.”

Graphic design professor Jessi Oliano was a student of Ebo’s and now has an office across from him.

“He was super supportive of me and my passion for graphic design and now having the privilege to work right across the hall from him as a colleague. I can say he’s nothing short of extraordinary,” said Oliano. “He’s a wealth of knowledge and left a lasting impact on many and I know those are going to be big shoes to fill.”

Ebo always taught communications, but worked in many different areas at Rider, some of which included serving as the former director of multicultural studies for 12 years and teaching in the Baccalaureate Honors Program and Educational Opportunity Program.

Junior marketing major Amanda LaRosa, who had Ebo as a freshman, said, “He was one of the first professors I had ... and his impact was immediate. His teaching style is truly memorable.”



Photo courtesy of Rider University

**Bosah Ebo** began teaching communications at Rider 37 years ago.

In 1994, Ebo received the Distinguished Teaching Award at commencement. When Ebo got up to speak, he said he didn’t understand why he was receiving an award for doing what he was supposed to do. The crowd chuckled.

“How many people get up in the morning and say ‘I am looking forward to going to work?’ I get up every morning and I can’t wait to be here,” said Ebo.

# Mentorship, confidence key for women leaders

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## Natural leaders

Rider women’s basketball Head Coach Lynn Milligan centers her teaching approach for the young womxn on her team around guidance, making sure she’s a “sounding board” to help her players grow in their own skin.

“Mentorship is important because there’s a lot of things that happen to these young ladies’ lives that have nothing to do with basketball. We want to make sure they know how to make good choices,” said Milligan. “For me it’s not micromanaging, it’s more about guiding. It’s okay to make mistakes, and I want to make sure our space for these young ladies is safe.”

Milligan graduated from Rider in 1992, and worked hard as an assistant coach in hopes of becoming head coach at her alma mater.

The day she received her dream position was a turning point in her career. This year marks her 18th season as head coach of Rider women’s basketball.

With pride in her voice as she discussed the program’s successes, surrounded by team photos signed by players from previous years on her office walls, Milligan echoed a sentiment to any young woman aspiring to be a leader.

“Ask questions, don’t be afraid to talk, but then don’t be afraid to listen. God gave us two ears and one

mouth. Don’t be afraid to challenge what you believe in,” she said. “In my era, we weren’t supposed to speak out, we weren’t supposed to be the ones that ruffled feathers and challenged authority. Now, that is the norm for the younger generation and that’s something that we want our women to be able to do.”

As a young, women leader, Student Government Association President Christina Natoli shares the same



Josiah Thomas/The Rider News

**Lynn Milligan** coaches her team at the MAAC tournament.

belief that mentorship helps people flourish in their roles.

In her freshman year at Rider, Natoli, a senior political science major, had no intentions of being a leader on campus, but after seeing the female SGA

president at the time, Liz O’Hara ’22, her mental barriers were removed.

Natoli leans on O’Hara in her current role and hopes she can have the same impact on younger, budding leaders across campus.

“Finding people who will uplift you is very important. I feel honored to be a leader on campus but also, it’s tough because as much as I value having other women in leadership roles, I think it’s important to represent generally,” said Natoli. “I don’t feel like I do things specifically because I’m a female president. I’m a president that happens to be female.”

All four of these influential leaders share the same thoughts on Womxn’s History Month: it’s a necessary time of year to bring light to women and their accomplishments.

“Womxn’s History Month is about all of those womxn who contributed to society, who didn’t have the recognition because they were women,” said Fredeen. “It’s about remembering the women who really started this fight. ... It’s about making certain that in another hundred years we’re still celebrating Womxn’s History Month and we’re still able to elevate the women in this country.”

# Rider DEI unchanged after DOE deadline

By Jake Tiger

**D**ESPITE a federal letter giving schools a Feb. 28 deadline and threatening to pull funding, Rider has not announced any amendments to its diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, as recent legal challenges are likely to give institutions a moment of reprieve.

Following the Department of Education’s Feb. 14 “Dear Colleague” letter, ordering all schools cease race-conscious programming, Rider organized a private, 13-member study group to comb through the university’s DEI offerings, searching for anything that federal onlookers could use to justify a withdrawal of federal funding.

Rider is a tuition-dependent institution, and many of its students rely on federal financial aid, like the Pell Grant program, Stafford Loans and the federal work-study program.

Rider President Gregory Dell’Omo said in an interview on Feb. 25 that a loss of federal funding would be detrimental to the university, which is simultaneously fending off an multi-million-dollar operating deficit, nationwide dips in college enrollment and the pandemic’s lingering financial ripples.

On March 3, Rider Communications Director Rachel Stengel declined interview requests from The Rider News and instead offered a statement on behalf of the study group: “At this time, the study group is continuing its review of University programs and policies. We will continue to assure our compliance with applicable law as we study related developments in the courts and the administration. Rider stands against all forms of discrimination. We strive to be a welcoming and safe space for all.”

Vice President of External Affairs Kristine Brown, the chair of the study group, said she was unavailable for an interview and referred press inquiries to Stengel.

Dell’Omo’s office has not sent out additional universitywide updates since announcing the study group’s formation on Feb. 20.

The American Federation of Teachers and American Sociological Association filed a lawsuit against the DOE on Feb. 25, challenging its anti-DEI demands and its interpretation of a 2023 landmark U.S. Supreme Court case that ended race-based affirmative action in higher education.

The DOE’s letter asserts that if race-based admissions are unconstitutional, then all race-based programming and opportunities within education must be unconstitutional.

In a statement released by the American Federation of Teachers immediately following the suit, the organization’s president, Randi Weingarten, called the DOE letter vague, unconstitutional and “a grave attack on students, our profession and knowledge itself.”

Chief Diversity Officer Heeyoung Kim, who is a member of the study group, declined to answer questions about the study group but agreed to speak with The Rider News about the general state of DEI in higher education.

Kim said she attended a virtual meeting organized by the American Council of Education that focused on understanding the “Dear Colleague” letter and its implications. The meeting, attended by about 5,000 people, showed just how many educators are “not sure what to do,” she said.

After President Donald Trump’s anti-DEI executive orders and the DOE’s “Dear Colleague” letter, higher education institutions across the country have already dialed back or disassembled their DEI initiatives.

While Rider’s DEI initiatives remained intact after the deadline, Rowan University, located about an hour from Rider in South Jersey, renamed its Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to the Division of Inclusive Excellence, Community and Belonging. Shortly after, in a Feb. 27 statement from the university’s president, titled, “Ensuring we are inclusive to all,” Rowan announced it completely closed the renamed division in response to the “Dear Colleague” letter.

Kim had “many sleepless nights last year” seeing states propose and pass bans on DEI initiatives.



Twelve states currently have DEI bans, including Texas, Florida and North Carolina, and anti-DEI bills have been introduced in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Minnesota and more, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education. An anti-DEI bill has not been passed or introduced in New Jersey.

The bill in Pennsylvania, introduced on Jan. 22, would ban higher-education institutions in the state from having mandatory diversity training or requiring students to take diversity-related courses to graduate.

Rider’s CDO reiterated that the university is “not going to give up” on DEI, as it has heavily invested in its diversity initiatives in recent years, from the creation of Kim’s position to the founding of Rider’s Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

Rider Trustee Joe McDougall, who is chair of the active presidential search committee, said to The Rider News in November 2024 that diversity was being valued during the hunt for Rider’s next president, mentioning the high diversity among candidates placed by Storbeck Search, the firm spearheading the process.

McDougall also said he planned to give the committee DEI training to ensure the hiring is “done the right way.”

Kim said, “Our mission has not been changed. ... Whatever action we do, I do believe that we’re going to serve our mission, and at the same time, whatever guidelines come out, we have to comply.”

# Rider aims to keep students safe amid changes

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They were not alone in that struggle. Stasolla explained there were other institutions that shared the same sentiment in training and webinars offered to institutions through the Association of Title IX Administrators to help transition to the 2024 regulations when they were first put in place on Aug. 1, 2024.

Reverting back to the 2020 regulations, Title IX departments nationwide and education administrators were required to dissolve the training they had undergone less than six months prior for the 2024 regulations.

McKinney and Stasolla explained that it was especially challenging for them to have to re-train various departments and organizations at Rider with the 2024 regulations in August, only for them to then revert back to the 2020 regulations.

“[The regulations] become a real Bible for us,” said Stasolla. “Although some of the training still applies, it is frustrating and makes our job more challenging.”

Director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion Jasmine Johnson expressed her appreciation for training amidst the changes in regulations.

“Although training is tedious, it is definitely needed,” said Johnson. “In general, regulations change and when they do, it’s important for us to privy on what those changes are and how it will impact not only faculty and staff, but students as well.”

According to Johnson, the CDI has not yet been trained for the 2020 regulations, but she presumes it is only a matter of time before they are, being that they are a diverse space.

Faculty and administration are not the only ones who have encountered struggles with the change in regulations.

Students have also been faced with confusion amidst the back and forth changes of the Title IX policies, according to the Student Government Association Vice President for University Affairs Moira Geiger, a sophomore computer science major, who oversees the Health and Safety Committee.

“I definitely do see students being confused and getting frustrated with these changes because it’s already confusing on an administration level and a governmental level, let alone a student one,” said Geiger.

As the regulation changes unfolded, Geiger explained that the Student Government Association has been meeting with faculty and administration to ensure it is more of “an adaptive process.”

“Our motivation is to keep everything as open to everyone as possible and the best way to go about it is to keep everyone in the know so that everyone is on the same page,” said Geiger.

**‘Protect all students’**

Johnson echoed Geiger’s sentiment about helping students find a safe space, including people of the LGBTQIA+ community who may be affected by these changes.

In January, President Donald Trump signed an executive order that proclaimed only two biological sexes would be recognized: male and female. As a part of this executive order, Trump put an end to Biden’s

efforts to extend Title IX’s protections to transgender students on his first day in office.

“Even with the policy changes, I do believe there are still policies in place to protect all students, regardless of how a student may or may not identify,” said Johnson.

As Rider’s Title IX department continues to move forward with the 2020 regulations, they emphasize they are a resource for any students and faculty who are confused.

McKinney explained their goal in writing any subsequent policy is to always make it as digestible as possible.

“When students need to read the policy, it’s generally at a very low point in their life,” said McKinney. “It would be twice as difficult to understand some of this legal jargon when you’re already going through something so difficult, so I want them to be able to digest it as much as possible.”

While the policy is available on the university website, McKinney confessed that he does not expect everyone to be as familiar with it as the department is or have it memorized.

Amid the changes, McKinney expressed that the Title IX department is always willing to walk people through the process whether they are just starting out or have experience in the field.

“We’re not here to punish people,” said McKinney. “We’re here to educate and then address the behavior in question and support the students involved. And that hasn’t changed even with the change in the regulations.”



# Home Away From Home: Dave Green's journey to Rider

By Sarah Griffin

**A**NYONE who has been in the Student Recreation Center this semester may have seen Dave Green with his white hair and signature simple T-shirts, playing pool while making his friends laugh.

Passersby may not realize how far Green traveled to get to Rider until his accent speaks for him.

Green, 63, is an international journalism student from Australia, who is studying at Rider for the spring semester.

Although he might always seem happy to some, Green said he struggled with homesickness when he first arrived.

"I have a very large support mechanism back home," Green said with tears in his eyes. "I wouldn't have that support mechanism [here]."

Green joined the foreign exchange program from the University of Sunshine Coast in Queensland, Australia.

According to Green, when he sat down on the flight to America, his first thought was how big of a change this journey was going to be.

To make the transition easier, Green and his wife, Simone, came to America before the semester started.

"We came over just before Christmas and then we Christmased in Texas," Green said.

As the spring semester kicked off, Green and Simone did their best to keep in contact as much as possible. With a 15-hour time difference, Green expressed the challenge of updating each other on their days.

Green and Simone "FaceTime probably every second day," he said.

In an email to The Rider News, Simone said she hopes "Dave learns some amazing things from this experience, not only about himself but is inspired to continue learning and growing his knowledge for when he returns to Australia."

Simone continued by thanking Rider for helping Green find a home on the other side of the world.

"I want to thank all Rider University staff and students who have welcomed Dave into the Rider community," Simone wrote. "With Dave being a mature aged student I was worried that he would

struggle to fit in, but he has told me so many stories about how welcomed he's felt."

Aside from Green's wife, he mentioned that he misses the family dog, Marcy, as well.

"I think I miss her more than my wife," he said chuckling.

According to Green, he has been married to his wife for 18 years.

After Simone returned home to care for her and Green's family, Dave continued to travel the United States before classes started.

One of the places Green went was the Outer Banks, North Carolina. Green's visit to the Outer Banks brought him somewhat of a culture shock.

"The day I decided to go to the Maritime Museum down near Hatteras, it was closed because it was a Sunday."

Green said he has become friends with some other students from abroad.

One of Green's friends and fellow study abroad student Louis Schummer, an international business major, called Green "an awesome person" and that he "likes to spend time with him."

"I think he has experienced a lot in his life," Schummer said. "He's very funny. He's down to do stuff whenever it's possible."

Rodrigo Alves, a senior game development major, said he spends "a lot of time" with Dave. They often have lunch and dinner together at Daly Dining Hall, where they are also joined by other international students.

"[Dave] is a very nice person who has a lot of experiences and he can pass these to us," Alves said.

Dave and the other international students that arrived at Rider for the spring semester were given the time to get to know each other with a welcome lunch with Rider President Gregory Dell'Omo, a shopping trip to Target to gather school supplies and a trip to New York City.

With an outgoing personality, Green easily connected with several of the international students he met when he first arrived.



Sarah Griffin/The Rider News

**Dave Green**, an international journalism student, arrived at Rider from the University of Sunshine Coast in Queensland, Australia.

"Dave is a very funny guy," Alves added. "It is very hard to find someone like him."

To document his time in America, Green keeps a log of his days in a personal journal. He explained that he wants to be able to keep the memories he makes at Rider with him for a long time.

When considering how big of an adjustment moving to America was for him, Green admitted that he is glad he did it.

Green had advice for people who debated studying abroad: "Just do it ... leap at the opportunity to study overseas no matter where it is you go."

*This article is part of the Home Away From Home series by The Rider News to highlight international students from Rider's Office of International Education.*



# PRSSA unfolds reasons for book bans in public spaces

By Grace Bertrand

**S**TUDENTS gathered in a crowded room on the third floor of the Franklin F. Moore Library on Feb. 26 to educate themselves on books that have been banned or challenged by public schools, universities and libraries.

Alongside the university library, the Public Relations Student Society of America organized a trivia night to teach students and faculty about the vitality of the fight against censorship.

"By banning books, you're limiting access to different stories, experiences and different ways of life," said PRSSA Vice President Delaney Misier, a senior communications major.

The PRSSA hosted the event in an effort to bring awareness to their Bateman campaign for EveryLibrary, a non-partisan, pro-library organization dedicated to ensuring stable funding and access to libraries nationwide.

In an effort to expand EveryLibrary's target audience, which is typically middle-aged women, PRSSA chose to start their campaign at Rider, where they have a greater reach of students.

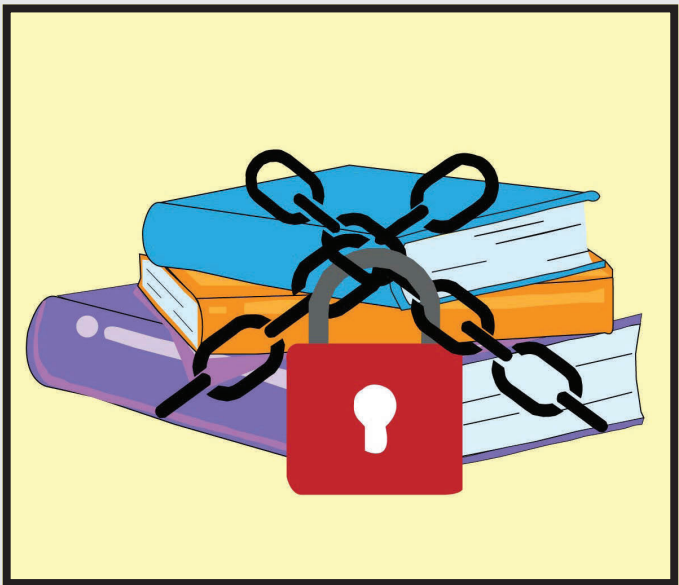
Approximately 15 students were in attendance at the event, fulfilling their goal.

"I think change starts at a younger age and so by instilling these ideas into college students, I have hope that we will make a better future," said Misier.

Some of the questions asked throughout the night consisted of similar statistics about book bans in certain states and the topics on which books were challenged.

A question that was a crowd favorite was about why the Goosebumps series had been banned or challenged: violence, witchcraft, gambling and crude language.

In the 2023-24 school year, there were 10,046 instances of book bans recorded, according to PEN America, a nonprofit organization that raises awareness



Jasmine Greene/The Rider News

Rider's Public Relations Student Society of America educated students on book bans through an engaging trivia night.

on the protection of free expression in the U.S.

The trivia night honed in on other similar statistics to people in attendance through a variety of questions in a Kahoot!-style trivia game.

Misier explained that hosting a trivia night was much more "engaging" from a younger perspective than if they had done a traditional lecture.

Sophomore communications major Jenna Munswami, the winner of the trivia night, agreed with the sentiment that the interactivity helped her learn more about book bans than other events.

"I like that we have people advocating for book bans on campus and raising awareness about it," said Munswami. "It's crazy to me that in our day and age, any book can be censored just because people in higher power do not agree with its ideals."

To further expand the target audience for their campaign to end censorship across schools and

libraries, PRSSA explained their commitment to encouraging students to take their passion against book bans to voting ballots.

"EveryLibrary does a lot to support elections for libraries," said PRSSA Secretary Shawn Rippey, a senior political science major. "Hopefully, if we get more younger people involved informed, we can get them a little more active in voting."

Misier acknowledged that while New Jersey itself is safe for now because of its own anti book ban legislation, the Freedom to Read Act, there is always a risk of censorship.

"Every new election comes with a new person that could strip away some of those protections that some of these other states thought they had too," said Misier. "To get involved, people need to definitely reach out to lawmakers, peacefully participate in protests and talk with younger students."

To close out the list of 25 questions, PRSSA posed a hard-hitting final question that they felt accurately represented the current state of censorship in the U.S.: "In 2023, there were 938 attempts to censor books. How many attempts were there in 2014?" The answer to the question is 235 attempts.

PRSSA explained that their hope is for the number of attempts to go back down in the future.

The first step for them is making sure students are educated on the different statistics on book bans so they can properly take initiative.

"I feel like one of the coolest things about our country is how much freedom that we have to express ourselves and our views," said Rippey. "If more and more of our freedoms start getting stripped away and the people that are higher up feel comfortable stripping those freedoms away, who knows what other freedoms they are going to try to take?"





Isaiah Ward (left), a junior game design major, and Dylan Lux (right), a junior secondary education major, play "Strike Light."



Students hop into the center of the room to dance.



Students play "4 in a Row" in the Cavalla Room.

# The Bronc Boardwalk and nostalgic fun in Cavalla Room

By Madison Lewis

**E**VEN without flocks of seagulls, wooden walkways and 90-degree heat, the Student Government Association, Relay for Life and Club Sports Council transported students to a summer day at the shore.

The Bronc Boardwalk was a three-hour event in the Cavalla Room that had quintessential boardwalk-themed games and food.

Once an event-goer signed in, the festivities began. The students were faced with the difficult decision of where to start.

Some opted to play competitive boardwalk-style games, and some went directly to the food and beverage stations.

The students looking for a contest could choose from mini golf, skeeball, basketball, "4 in a Row" and a speed game called "Strike Light."

A gaggle of students congregated around a game, Strike Light, as two players on opposite sides of a table had to press buttons that lit up in front of them. Inevitably, competition got heated and the sounds of aggressive smacking rang across the room.

Every game at the event was surrounded by a crowd of eager players, patiently waiting for their turn to impress onlookers.

The food stations were no different. There was a root beer float stand that had a consistent flow of people choosing between vanilla and chocolate soft serve to accompany their fizzy beverage.

Next to the root beer station was self-serve popcorn in a nostalgic cart that one may recognize from their childhood boardwalk. There were other stables, like funnel cake, lemonade and iced tea. Out of left field was a tray full of cheesesteak egg rolls, but they were a hit nonetheless.

Joe Giambelluca, a senior English major, attended the event and commended the staff and coordinators for their efforts in setting up the games and food.

He had only one humorous critique: "I felt myself being transported more so to a carnival. Not as much [as] a boardwalk. ... there is a lack of wooden features," he said, barely containing his laughter.

Giambelluca took note of the root beer floats and enjoyed sipping on the refreshing treat while partaking in golf, basketball and other games.

"I was thinking to myself, 'If I was not going to this event, what am I doing with my life,'" he said.

When recalling his favorite aspect of the night, Giambelluca liked seeing the community and witnessing the smiles on their faces.

Before the students entered the first floor of the Bart Luedeke Center, they had to check in on a survey. The digital sign-in entered the potentially-lucky into a raffle to be called on Monday.

Relay for Life tabled at the check-in point, before students entered the Cavalla Room doors. The organization was selling Luminaria bags, with the \$5 donations going toward the American Cancer Society. Luminaria bags are tangible memorials for those who have passed.

The organization also contributed gifts to the giveaway on Monday.

Junior game design major and sports council member Isaiah Ward said the Connect Four along with the food and the assorted drinks made the event like "a long beach boardwalk."

He said his job that night was to help the event run smoothly. His favorite portion of The Bronc Boardwalk was the dance circle.

Toward the end of the night, the DJ played recognizable songs like the Macarena, the Cupid Shuffle and other line dances. Event goers ran to the center of the room to follow along to the directions outlined in the music. They formed a pod, quickly getting into the rhythm and moving in time with one another.

He said, "I have never really been to a boardwalk but I'd like to imagine it's somewhat like this."

## Notable Womxn

### WORD SEARCH

IN CELEBRATION OF WOMXN'S HISTORY MONTH

GBRSCDDSRHXLYGTUFUSUPCNGOJ  
XRVLBMQZKVHHKQBBOXZDOVURBW  
HRUTHBADERGINSBURGCWSC IYP  
IHMQFMJBWDIIDXEFFCJPFKZRQ  
LFBIFONILTFEYDEFYRFRNWMR  
UJZSCMXMJ SODGHWORMGXBKKRY  
CBHSCHWCB SUSANBANTHONYNDH  
YEBRI LEWOQFEHKOPOGZDOLQDU  
SMLSDXMLYEIDNOHGXREQFVOXL  
TAAFECTFLGLRACQOLEVRWLLJW  
OXHLSSTNLEIOCANIBTJOYNTNY  
NDZSAFTFOPOVURXIBADSDFGYD  
EORSILJZNWVBRHNRMTAKCATX  
NRJEJNARUSPKAWRYZHXPBGWVZ  
WOZFDHNYVBPESMWNCUDAALDDO  
JTRERECLONNBPSANDNIRCUEZW  
WHTELSYWUWNDXRIEBMKINJAS  
TYIPKTFBTBJSCEFEDESSDVKS  
MGCYWLJVXERAGBMJTRZVPDEIE  
BIVAJEOMITMUFVEYAGWONQSQA  
TLCEJ KMRHILZHZOIKMWHXGGTQ  
YLFVYSTBJPDOLVAFXFKBNNDMW  
DIIDSOIWZVILGBGIOYIBJCAQL  
EAUWKUPCEJRWHARRIETTUBMAN  
MMTWJUNNKIIIVFLDAKAMWDWQV

### WORD BANK

Ruth Bader Ginsburg  
Michelle Obama  
Susan B. Anthony  
Lucy Stone  
Harriet Tubman

Greta Thunberg  
Malala Yousafzai  
Dorothy Gilliam  
Rosa Parks



Scan to check your answers and learn more about these distinguished womxn!



# Oddly whimsical ‘Into the Woods’ pleases, perplexes

**A**s fellow audience members and I walked into the Yvonne Theater to view Rider’s adaptation of the well-known Stephen Sondheim musical “Into the Woods” this weekend, we were transported into a library full of fairytale characters. Every once in a while, a librarian even shushed the audience giving the theater a real library feel.

If you are not familiar with the show, “Into the Woods” retells the classic fairy tales “Cinderella,” “Little Red Riding Hood,” “Jack and the Beanstalk” and “Rapunzel” by blending them all together.

It all begins with a husband and wife who are bakers and find out their family has been cursed by a witch that prevents them from having a child. They must gather a slipper “as pure as gold,” a cow “as white as milk,” a cape “as red as blood” and hair “as yellow as corn” in three nights to break the curse.

The set design was captivating with towering book shelves, three tables set up with characters rotating in and out of them and a large window behind them showing tree branch shadows. Throughout the show, the cast utilized the different levels, using a bookshelf in the middle almost as a runway.

The lighting design supported the story by isolating the narrator at points of tension where he is not sure how he is going to continue to tell the story. The lighting that came in through the large window behind the set changed hues and intensities to further help set the moods of each scene.

The use of props and the space in general also appealed to me. During scenes, other characters and ensemble were seen in the background sitting at library tables talking, reading or even napping. They would utilize the books and bags during choreography, giving the props a purpose.

Despite this unexpected setting for the musical, I feel the set design was well thought out and executed.

However, some parts of the costume design threw me off of the show’s fairytale vibes. For example, Rapunzel, played by senior musical theater major Lyndsey Adkisson, sported a cheer uniform and her prince, played by senior musical theater Rafael Ferreira, a varsity jacket. Being that Rapunzel was trapped in a tower for her whole life, I was not sure why she was presented as a cheerleader.

Throughout the show, the modern adaptations of character’s wardrobes were not addressed. Jack, played by senior musical theater major Hunter Quinn, could be seen wearing a flannel and overalls, more fitting to his character, but it was unclear as to why his cow, Milky White, played by sophomore musical theater major Noah Bantle, was presented wearing a football jersey.

Cinderella’s step sisters, played by senior musical theater major Madison Winkler and junior musical theater major Grace McKenna, wore bright pink metallic jackets, heavy and bright eye makeup and one of them even wore a blinged out hat that said “QUEEN.” Along with that, Cinderella, played by senior musical theater major Lydia Diekmann, and her prince, played by junior musical theater major Alain Brutus wore prom prince and princess sashes when they got married. Some of the costume choices did not align with the other characters or the plot in their story.

Because of the show’s humorous and absurd nature, I can see why the costume team may have been trying to go for a more campy feel. Though, for me, the use of these modern costumes made me feel disconnected from certain scenes.

I feel if these more modern elements were incorporated into the plot, or if the characters had all been wearing campy costumes, I would have understood the purpose of these artistic choices better.

Other than costume design, I felt the rest of the show was executed well. The entire cast was insanely talented and were able to give justice to the characters.

In particular, the Witch, played by senior musical theater major Olivia Sauerberg, and Jack’s Mother, played by senior musical theater major Mia Mintz, were vocal powerhouses. I could feel the intense energy and emotion throughout all of their solos, really giving depth to their characters.

While I thoroughly enjoyed myself watching Rider’s production of “Into the Woods,” the costume design left me wondering exactly what kind of vision they were going for.

*Jay Roberson*  
senior English and secondary education major



Photo courtesy of Peter G. Borg

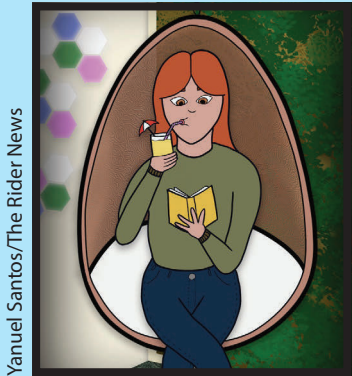
Rapunzel, played by senior musical theater major **Lyndsey Adkisson**, wore a cheerleading uniform throughout the show.



Scan to read other student opinions from this week!

## DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE: The priceless benefits of alone time

By Maggie Peña



Yanuel Santos/The Rider News



Destiny Pagan/The Rider News

## DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE: Back to the basics for emotional regulation

By Libby D’Orvilliers

## DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE: NJ Assembly elections critical to flipping political script

By Joe Seewald



Destiny Pagan/The Rider News

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Josiah Thomas/The Rider News

## Broncs grab big win on Senior Night

**By Samantha Clark**

**I**n a nail-biting send-off, Rider women’s basketball triumphed over the Merrimack Warriors 64-61 on Feb. 27’s Senior Night, its their last home game of the regular season and the last moments in the Alumni Gym for the team’s five seniors.

After the first minute of unsuccessful play by both teams, Merrimack scored the first points of the game, but senior guard Gabby Turco quickly responded with a wide-open three from the corner.

Turco said, “Anytime you beat a team one time, it’s hard to beat them a second time ... so, I think, knowing that that was their mindset, [we were] trying to not only match their energy, but give more.”

With crucial rebounds and blocks, the Broncs’ communication in the paint led them on a 7-0 run, giving them the largest lead of the game – an eight-point advantage.

However, Merrimack’s defensive and offensive efforts grew stronger in the final minutes of the first, ending the quarter 17-17.

The second quarter began with a 6-0 run by the Warriors, but Rider’s defense tightened, countering Merrimack’s strong offensive moves.

Layups from Turco and points by senior guard Mariona Cos-Morales and junior forward Emilee Tahata quickly tied the game once again with four minutes left in the second.

Back-to-back points by freshman guard Jocelyn Chavez put the Broncs up by two, 29-27, at the half.

The Warriors opened the second half with another 6-0 run, holding Rider scoreless for the first five minutes and taking the lead.

Freshman guard Camryn Collins made multiple offensive plays, driving to the basket to gain points for the Broncs and evening the score late in the third.

Tahata and Collins quickly added points to the scoreboard in the final minute of the quarter, but the Broncs found themselves shy, trailing 48-45.

Cos-Morales opened the final quarter with a successful and one layup to tie the game for the eighth time.

“It’s been two great years, and this couldn’t have been a better game to finish it off,” Cos-Morales said.

Freshman forward Winner Bartholomew hit three back-to-back layups in under two minutes, making her the leading scorer with 15 points.

Additionally, the Warriors shot 50% from the free-throw line in the fourth, missing six out of their 12 attempts, contributing to the Broncs’ small lead.

Collins knocked down a corner three to break the final tie of the game and give Rider the lead with just 36 seconds left.

With more successful free throw shooting, the Broncs slowly widened the gap to secure a 64-61 victory over the Warriors.

Seniors Cos-Morales, Turco, Sanaa Redmond, Jamia Blake and Taylor Blunt celebrated their final game in the Alumni gym.

Turco and Collins finished with 14 points. The Broncs final games of the regular season on the road.

“We gotta go up there and take two. Everybody knows that... It starts tomorrow in practice,” Head Coach Lynn Milligan said.

Rider will travel to New York to face Canisius on March 6 at 6 p.m. and Niagara on March 8 at 1 p.m. Both games will be streamed on ESPN+.

### MEN’S BASKETBALL

## Rider snatches win over Merrimack on the road

**By Rich Saile**

**A**FTER losing its third straight game in a critical stretch of Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference play, Rider men’s basketball earned a hard-fought win in North Andover, Massachusetts, over the Merrimack Warriors 83-78. The Broncs currently sit at the 10th seed in the MAAC with two games left, both at Alumni Gym.

On Feb. 28, the Broncs traveled north to take on the Warriors. Looking to avenge its former loss to Merrimack, Rider had to contain the front-runner for MAAC player of the year Adam Clark.

The Broncs started out strong from both graduate student T.J. Weeks Jr. and junior Zion Cruz attacked the Warriors defense from multiple levels.

Weeks hit the first 3-pointer of the game in the first 75 seconds of action and recovered an offensive rebound to put up a tough fadeaway jumper from the elbow. After that, Cruz splashed a pair of 3-pointers from the left and right wing.

The Broncs offense focused on the inside game and looked to put the Warriors in early foul trouble with pressure from their front court. But, the Broncs had to prepare for the Warriors offense that operated like a high-speed track meet and focused on quick, easy buckets.

Rider struggled to limit the paint and tried to key in on the inside game which led the Warriors to kick out for open three-point shots.

On top by six with just over nine minutes left in the first half, Rider let Merrimack close out the half with a 21-13 run and took a 42-40 lead into the locker room.

The Broncs recouped their energy ready to take command of the second half which started with Cruz scoring seven points.

Trailing now by three, Rider made a substitution that would flip the game in their favor, inserting sophomore forward Ife West-Ingram into the game.

West-Ingram scored five points in a four-minute stretch including a layup while being fouled. He made the free throw to complete the three-point play which gave the Broncs the lead.

The Warriors connected on a pair of threes while focusing on getting to the rim for easy baskets to keep the game within a single possession.



Josiah Thomas/The Rider News

**Junior guard Zion Cruz rises high for a jump shot.**

In the final three and a half minutes, sophomore Ruben Rodriguez scored five of the last 10 points for Rider, including a three-pointer from the right corner that helped spark a late Rider run.

The Broncs snapped a three-game losing skid with the 83-78 win and improved to 11-18 overall on the season with a 7-11 record in MAAC play.

“All of the credit goes to our guys, I thought our guys battled well the whole game. I thought they prepared well this week, that was a big win for a different number of reasons. All the credit goes to those guys,” said Rider Head Coach Kevin Baggett.

“It’s very important because all of our games have been close, so just fixing those small little mistakes and details will help us win these last two games,” West-Ingram said.

The Broncs had six players score in double figures for the first time since Nov. 6, 2023, against Immaculata and accomplished it for the first time against a Division I opponent since 2019 against Bucknell.

Rodriguez finished with a career-high with 12 points while Cruz matched his career-high with 23 points achieved.

The Broncs will return home to Alumni Gym to take on the Canisius Golden Griffins on March 6 with an opportunity to clinch a spot in the MAAC tournament in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Tipoff at Alumni Gym is scheduled for 7 p.m. and the game will be broadcast on ESPN+.

### LACROSSE

## Rider dominates Iona in 14-7 home win

**By Dave Green**

**I**N Rider lacrosse’s 14-7 home win on Feb. 26, the Broncs came out strong, but Iona struck first.

Rider quickly responded with goals from senior attacker Toni Gismondi, sophomore midfielder Elena Bontatibus and graduate student attacker Anna Devlin.

Iona netted a second, but Rider capitalized on a free position with senior attacker Selena Carrington scoring, assisted by freshman attacker Elizabeth Shean. Iona answered back with their third before Rider extended their lead with goals from freshman midfielder Madison Rothwein, Gismondi and junior attacker Katie Walsh. At the end of the first quarter, Rider led 7-2.

Walsh opened the second quarter with a quick goal, and a strong Rider defense denied Iona multiple chances. Iona managed a fourth goal, but a green card left the Gaels vulnerable, allowing Carrington to score Rider’s ninth. Sturdy defense by junior goalie Jamie Kubach secured Rider’s 9-4 halftime lead.

In the third quarter, Iona took advantage of two Rider green cards to score their fifth. Rider responded with a 10th goal by Devlin, assisted by Walsh. Iona added a sixth from a free position, but Rider held a 10-6 lead entering the fourth quarter.

Iona struck early in the final quarter, but a green card allowed Rider to regain control. Shean and Bontatibus combined for back-to-back goals, extending the lead to 12-7. More strong defense and a crucial save by freshman goalie Avery May denied Iona any momentum. Walsh and Carrington sealed the win with two late goals, securing a dominant 14-7 victory for Rider.

Scorer of a hat trick Carrington said Rider’s offense realized that they were not as aggressive as

they should have been at the start of the match.

“Last year in conference it definitely was very hard, and we were expecting that coming into this year, but I think once we started flowing we really saw the potential that we have. I think our flow made it to where we won by seven goals,” Carrington said.

Kubach commented on Rider’s win, “I think for the team, especially the returners, it was the best feeling ever. Being able to make that statement that we’re back and we’re ready for all of you. We should have had them last year and it’s a great feeling to have them this year at least,” she said.

Head Coach Evan Mager was happy with the team’s win.

“It’s an exciting game ... it’s the fastest game on two feet. It’s still new here. Fast game, fast pace, non-stop, physical, come out and check the sport out, if you haven’t seen it I think it’s something a lot of people would like,” Mager said.

Rider will head down to the shore to take on the Monmouth Hawks. The matchup will begin at 12 p.m. on March 5.



Destiny Pagan/The Rider News

**Freshman attacker Elizabeth Shean holds the ball in her stick.**



TRACK AND FIELD

## ‘Hailstorm’: MAAC champion weathers wave of adversity

By Kadie DiGiuseppe

**E**VEN after years of setbacks, Hailey Palmer came out victorious in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Indoor Track and Field Championship with the end of her Bronc career approaching.

Along with the entirety of Rider track and field winning a MAAC Championship for the third year in a row, Palmer, nicknamed “Hailstorm” by her coach, earned second in the 400-meter race to help get the Broncs get up to 142 points which secured their narrow victory.

### The best decision

Palmer is a senior sprinter from South Plainfield, New Jersey, and is a three-time MAAC champion. She has been with Rider since her freshman year and has gone her entire career without redshirting.

“I was actually a softball kid. I never had a desire to run track in my life,” said Palmer. “I was always just very fast.” Palmer continued to say that her reasoning for joining her high school’s track team in 2017 was so she could get in shape for that upcoming softball season. She wanted to make the varsity team, despite being a freshman.

Starting off, Palmer was placed in the 400 race which opened her eyes to competing in races with her teammates. Due to her success in that indoor season, she decided to stick with track for the spring season instead of trying out for the softball team.

Needless to say, Palmer knew she made the right decision after coming to Rider and deciding to continue running track at the collegiate level.

Her coach, Brett Harvey described her as a “good” high school runner. Since she started the season after the COVID-19 pandemic, Harvey and his crew did not have as much information to go off of when recruiting. One of the main things that swayed Harvey was the fact that Palmer was a 4.0 student.

“Life was a lot different back then. I was meeting new people for the first time and it was my first time living on my own. I had a lot of stress from school because I am a biochemistry major so it was a big jump for me,” said Palmer.

Palmer recalled her freshman year when the Broncs placed second at the MAAC Indoor Track and Field championship behind Monmouth University. She also explained that with the adjustment from high school to college, she did not perform as she had hoped in that season.

“I think she only ran a faster time than she did in high school maybe once,” said Harvey. She made the

conference indoor final but placed last and was left out of the outdoor finals that season. However, her main contributions came that season on the outdoor relays.

“In her freshman year, there was no guarantee that this girl was going to be amazing but then that’s just a credit to the work she’s put in year after year to get to where she is now,” said Harvey.

### Battling injuries

Going into the next two seasons, Palmer and her team knew they had more preparing to do if they wanted to win the title. The hard work paid off for the Broncs and they brought home the MAAC Indoor Track and Field Championship title. That season, Harvey described her as the “breakout story” that helped Rider win that championship.

After not placing in the championship her freshman year, Palmer finished third in the 300 in 57 seconds which was her season best. Palmer recalled that moment and explained that she never imagined she would have been able to do that.

However, Palmer explained that the turning point in her career was her outdoor season her sophomore year. Before that, she had felt like her body was “burning out.” That outdoor season she beat her personal record with a time of 56 seconds but her quickest time came in the 400 her junior year, which was in 55.9 seconds. “She arrived that year on a different level,” Harvey said.

Palmer said that she felt she was in the best shape of her life to start her junior indoor season until she got the flu leading up to the MAAC Indoor Track and Field Championship in 2024. However, she ended up placing second and fourth in her two events which helped Rider pick up its second indoor title in a row. According to Harvey, she was unable to run until the day of championships.

“There’s people who warm up at championships and are just like ‘I can’t do it today,’ but she went out and found a way to make the finals,” said Harvey. “From my perspective as a coach I was already just proud of the way she rose to the challenge. She had something of a dream season right before that and then to get the flu is a pretty demoralizing thing to go through after doing all that work.”

### Senior season

Palmer said that her and her team knew that this season’s MAAC Championship was going to be a tough one. Not only the fact that the MAAC had expanded to 12 teams but also that Palmer was coming off a minor operation that took place in



Photo courtesy of Hailey Palmer

Senior sprinter **Hailey Palmer** celebrates her MAAC Championship. December 2024. She said that the reason she believes the team came away victorious is because of the growth that went on during the offseason and the years before that. Palmer said that she participated in the 200, 400 and 4x4 relay, once again recovering from an injury where she could not participate in physical activity for six weeks.

“Somewhere around the middle of January was literally the first time that she could run a step,” said Harvey. “We had to find a way to get her ready to go at the conference meet six weeks later.”

Palmer made it to the finals in both the 200 and the 400 during her senior year MAAC Indoor Championship while also tying her personal record in the 200. She also ran a season best in the 400 with a time of 56.6 seconds. “She’s just a rise to the occasion kid,” said Harvey.

Harvey said that she has an amazing work ethic and is very thankful for the work that she has put in as a Bronc. He also said she is incredibly reliable because of that which makes her stand out from the pack.

“We talk a lot in our program that we’re not interested in what you can do once, we’re interested in repeatable performances,” said Harvey. “As a coach that’s super comforting because you know you can count on that kid to give you a great effort.”

## DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

SOFTBALL

### Tournament of troubles for the Broncs



Destiny Pagan/The Rider News

Rider softball struggled in its weekend tournaments in Georgia and Connecticut, only winning two of six games.

By Lindsay Scarola



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BASEBALL

### Broncs split series at Western Carolina; win home opener over Saint Joseph’s



Josiah Thomas/The Rider News

Rider baseball turned up the offense and came back to Lawrenceville after tournaments.

By Benjamin Shinault



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